

House Appropriations Committee (APP)
Delegate Norman H. Conway, Chairman
Delegate James E. Proctor, Vice Chairman

Witness Guidelines and Committee FAQ's

Witness Guidelines:

Decorum

- All visitors are expected to observe common standards of decorum.
- Talking is not permitted and all audience members must be seated.
- Neither food nor beverages are permitted in the committee room.
- Audience members may not approach a committee member at his or her desk.
- Visitors are required to disable the sound features on their mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Hearing Procedures

The committee generally has three types of hearings where witnesses may testify – bill hearings, budget hearings, and bond bill hearings. Generally, committee hearings will begin at the time published in the hearing schedule or as announced by the chairman or subcommittee chair from the House floor.

Bill Hearings

All witnesses must sign the witness sign-up sheet in room 121 prior to the scheduled beginning of the bill hearing. The sign-up sheet is generally available in the committee office by 3 p.m. the day prior to the hearing and is available until 10 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the hearing.

The order in which witnesses testify will be determined by the chairman. Immediately prior to the start of the bill hearing, committee staff will post a listing of the order in which bills will be heard outside the hearing room door. Every effort will be made to follow this order. To expedite the hearing and allow all witnesses an opportunity to be heard, the chairman has the prerogative to limit questions from members or the time for witnesses to testify. In any event, witnesses should try to limit testimony to three minutes. Witnesses are urged NOT to read prepared testimony or repeat the testimony of previous witnesses.

For written testimony, the bill number should appear prominently on all copies of testimony submitted. The committee requires government agencies and bill sponsors to submit 40 copies of any written testimony, and requests other witnesses do the same. Written testimony should be provided to committee staff no later than two hours prior to the scheduled start time of the hearing. Written testimony delivered after this time will be considered late, and will not be distributed to committee members during the bill hearing. Late testimony for bill hearings will be placed in a folder for members to pick up later.

Budget Hearings

All witnesses must sign the witness sign-up sheet in room 121 prior to the scheduled beginning of the budget hearing. The sign-up sheet is generally available in the committee office by 3 p.m. the day prior to the hearing and is available until 10 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the hearing.

The budget hearing order is usually scheduled in advance by staff. However, the chairman or subcommittee chair may change the order of the hearing to accommodate department secretaries or agency personnel. Testimony is usually taken in the order in which individuals sign up; however, the chair has the discretion to change this order and the time allotted for testimony.

For written testimony, the name of the department or agency should appear prominently on all copies of testimony submitted. The committee requires government agencies to submit 25 copies of any written testimony for subcommittee budget hearings and 40 copies for full committee budget hearings – the committee requests other witnesses do the same. Written testimony should be provided to committee staff no later than two hours prior to the scheduled start time of the hearing. Written testimony delivered after this time will be considered late, and will not be distributed to committee members during the hearing. Late testimony for budget hearings will be placed in a folder for members to pick up later.

Bond Bill Hearings

Traditionally, the committee hears all bond bills on one Saturday in March called “Bond Bill Saturday” and the following Monday, and is coordinated with the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. Total testimony for each bill is limited to three minutes per bill with a maximum of 15 minutes per sponsor.

All witnesses must sign the witness sign-up sheet in room 121 prior to the scheduled beginning of the bill hearing. The sign-up sheet is generally available in the committee office by 3 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to Bond Bill Saturday and is available until 10 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the hearing.

For written testimony, the bill number should appear prominently on all copies of testimony submitted. The committee requires bill sponsors to submit 30 copies of any written testimony, and requests other witnesses do the same. Written testimony should be provided to committee staff no later than two hours prior to the scheduled start time of the hearing. Written testimony delivered after this time will be considered late, and will not be distributed to committee members during the bill hearing. Late testimony for bill hearings will be placed in a folder for members to pick up later.

Briefings

Briefings are public meetings held at the request of the chairman to provide specific budget and policy information to the committee. Due to the nature of the briefings, only individuals who are invited by the chairman to present may do so.

Equipment

The use of the committee’s audiovisual equipment for the presentation of testimony must be requested prior to the hearing’s scheduled start time. If auxiliary equipment is needed for subcommittee meetings (video monitor, slide projector, screen, etc.) or is required for a subcommittee hearing, please notify the assistant to the chairman at least one day in advance. Due to time constraints, the use of the committee’s audiovisual equipment is not permitted during bond bill hearings.

Recording of Committee Proceedings

All briefings, bill hearings, and budget hearings are recorded and are available on the General Assembly’s website. Members of the press or public who wish to record or photograph portions of a briefing or hearing are expected to remain in the audience or press area and follow the

posted rules, unless a special exception has been made. The committee wishes to keep disruptions caused by lights, cameras, and individuals moving around the room with equipment to a minimum. The assistant to the chairman must be notified prior to the start of a briefing or hearing if you wish to record or take photographs.